Statement made by US Secretary of State Mr. Warren Christopher

7688. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during the recent visit of the Prime Minister to US, the US Administration called on Pakistan to stop aiding militants operating in Kashmir;

(b) if so, whether the US Secretary of State Mr. Warren Christopher also declared at the same time that it did not warrant US to declare Pakistan as a Terrorist State; and

(c) in what precise context the statement was made by Mr. Christopher and what was Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) The Prime Minister and President Clinton promised to cooperate in the search for solutions to global challenges posed by international terrorism.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The 1993 report on "Patterns of Global Terrorism" released by the US State Government in April 1994 states that "there are credible reports of support by the Government of Pakistan for Kashmiri militants and some reports of support for Sikh separatists". The US Government announced in July, 1993 and January, 1994, that the US Secretary of State had determined, "after a full review of the facts and the law", that the available information does not warrant a finding for now that Pakistan "reportedly provided support for acts of international terrorism". Government have regularly apprised foreign Governments, including the US, of Pakistan's active support to subversive and terrorist activity in India. Government remain committed to taking strong and effective measures on the ground to counter terrorist activity aided and abetted by Pakistan.

Stampede at Mina in Saudi Arabia

7689. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: SHRI TARA CHARAN MAJUMDAR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some Indians have been killed in a stampede at Mina in Saudi Arabia recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the total number of Indians permitted for Haj during the current year;

(d) whether Government have provided any help to the Indians there; and

(e) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. There was a stampede in Mina near Makkah on 23.5.1994 where a large number of pilgrims had congregated for Haj rituals. According to the Saudi authorities, 270 pilgrims died in the stampede. It has been confirmed that 29 Indian pilgrims were among the victims, including 13 who had gone for Haj under the arrangements made through Haj Committee, 6 who had gone from India on their own on international passports and 10 Indians residing in Saudi Arabia on work permit.

(c) For Haj 1994 number of pilgrims permitted to proceed for Haj under arrangements made through Central Haj

Committee was fixed at 25,000. In addition, about 15000 Indians went for Haj on their own.

(d) and (e) Families of those killed in the stampede have been contacted in India through Central Haj Committee in order to asscertain the assistance required. Consulate General of India, Jeddah has contacted relatives of the deceased in Saudi Arabia to offer any help that they may need. Such assistance includes arrangements for their return journey to India, transportation to Madinah and facilities to contact their families in India. Members of the Indian Haj Medical Mission have been asked to pay special attention to those who sustained injuries in the stamapede.

Discriminatory Policy in Gulf Countries

7690. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to a Press news-item captioned "Descrimination against Gulf emigrants alleged" as reported in the "Statesman" dated 16th May, 1994;

(b) if so, whether discriminatory policy is being adopted by the Government towards emigrant workers in the Gulf countries;

(c) if so, whether the Indian Mission in the Gulf countries and in the industrial countries are not even helping the Indians there; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The discrimination alleged in the news item pertains to banking matters. The Information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

(c) and (d) Indian Missions in all countries assist Indian nationals on an on-going basis.

Democratic Rights of the Indian Nespapers in Foreign Countries

7691. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to a Press news-item captioned "Pak embassy sues Indian Newspapers" as reported in the "Statesman" dated 18th May, 1994;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether Government have taken any action in this regard;

(d) whether the democratic rights of the Indian Newspapers in foreign countries are being snatched; and

(e) if so, the further reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Pakistan Embassy in Washington has reportedly initiated legal action against a weekly newspaper "Express India", published from Washington D.C. which caters mainly to the Indian community. This followed publication of a despatch in "Express India" of April 15th, 1994, about 'internal problems' at the Pakistan Embassy in Washington.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) "Express India" newspaper is published in the USA. It is not an Indian newspaper. Therefore, there is no question of any infringement of the rights of any Indian newspaper.

(e) In view of answer to (d) above, this incident is not an occasion for the Government to take any action or to react in any manner.